

Message Text

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S E C R E T JOHANNESBURG 0151

NODIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFLE FROM EDMONDSON

E.O. 11652: X-GDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: WHERE TO?

1. IVOR RICHARD CLEARLY SEEMED DISCOURAGED WHEN I TALKED TO HIM YESTERDAY, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME HE SHOWED SOME CONCERN ABOUT SPEAKING TO THE PRESS, IF ONLY BECAUSE HE DID NOT KNOW YET WHAT CROSLAND WOULD BE SAYING IN PARLIAMENT. WHILE HE HAS NOT YET SHARED WHAT ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, IF ANY, HE HAS SUBMITTED TO LONDON, I SUSPECT THAT ONE ELEMENT IS LIKELY TO BE A CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR USG HELP TO BRING INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON SMITH, BOTH DIRECTLY AND THROUGH VORSTER. AT THE SAME TIME HE AGREED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO KEEP THE PROCESS OPEN FOR ANY KIND OF PROPOSALS THAT MIGHT LEAD TO A RESUMPTION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AT GENEVA.

2. WHEN I ASKED MONDAY WHETHER IAN SMITH COULD TURN THE KEY BACK TO UNLOCK THE DOOR HE SEEMED TO HAVE SLAMMED AND LOCKED, RICHARD SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS STILL POSSIBLE. WHEN I ASKED YESTERDAY IF HE THOUGHT SMITH MIGHT HAVE REJECTED THE BRITISH PROPOSALS FOR TACTICAL REASONS, PERHAPS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRESSURING THE AFRICANS TO THINK ABOUT MODIFICATIONS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE FIVE POINTS AS OPPOSED TO MODIFICATIONS IN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 JOHANN 00151 261412Z

THE OTHER DIRECTION, RICHARD INDICATED STRONG DOUBTS. IF SMITH'S REJECTION WERE TACTICAL, HE SAID, WE WOULD JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT HE HAS IN MIND. HE OBVIOUSLY DID NOT RPT DID NOT THINK SMITH WANTED TO NEGOTIATE, HOWEVER, AND SAID HE THOUGHT SMITH HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO TRY THE INTERNAL OPTION. GRENNAN SUGGESTED THAT AS THINGS NOW STAND, SMITH MIGHT EVEN BE RELUCTANT TO IMPLEMENT THE FIVE POINTS WITH

THE NATIONALISTS OUTSIDE OF RHODESIA. IT WAS CLEAR RICHARD BLAMES SMITH RATHER THAN ANY OF THE AFRICANS FOR THE CURRENT IMPASSE.

3. IN SEPARATE TALK WITH MANSFIELD I ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS MEANT BY VORSTER'S REPORTED STATEMENT MONDAY EVENING IN WHICH HE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "WHILE I CAN UNDERSTAND MR RICHARD'S DISAPPOINTMENT I DO NOT THINK THAT HIS DIAGNOSIS OF THE FAILURE IS FAIR IN ALL ASPECTS OR TAKES ACCOUNT OF ALL THE RELEVANT FACTS." MANSFIELD ASSUMED THIS WAS A REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT RICHARD HAD NOT OPENLY CRITICIZED THE NATIONALISTS' REJECTION OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE BUT DID CRITICIZE SMITH'S REJECTION OF THE BRITISH PAPER. I POINTED OUT THAT FROM SMITH'S VIEWPOINT THIS UNDOUBTEDLY SEEMED VALID; RICHARD HAD ACCEPTED THE AFRICANS' REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE ON ANY VERSION OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE YET CONDEMNED SMITH FOR BEING EQUALLY OBDURATE TOWARDS THE BRITISH PROPOSALS. THE BRITISH PLAN HAD SIMPLY TAKEN THE NATIONALISTS (MOSTLY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S) IDEAS AND TRIED TO MAKE THEM MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE RHODESIAN WHITES, BUT NO ONE HAD REALLY TRIED TO AMEND THE ORIGINAL PROPOSALS FOR A COUNCIL OF STATE TO MAKE THEM MORE ACCEPTABLE, THEORETICALLY AT LEAST, TO THE NATIONALISTS. MANSFIELD DID NOT DISAGREE.

4. COMMENT: IT WAS OBVIOUS IN GENEVA THAT ALL OF THE NATIONALIST DELEGATIONS SEEMED TO HAVE DEVELOPED A MENTAL BLOCK AGAINST ANY FORM OF TWO-TIER STRUCTURE FOR THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT DIFFERENT REPRESENTATIONAL
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 JOHANN 00151 261412Z

OR VOTING PATTERNS IN THE PROPOSED COUNCIL OF STATE COULD HAVE BEEN DEvised TO PREVENT A WHITE RHODESIAN VETO. ALTHOUGH IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER THE INTRANSIGENT AFRICAN STANCE AGAINST THE COUNCIL OF STATE IS EITHER MORE OR LESS UNREASONABLE THAN SMITH'S INFLEXIBLE ADHERENCE TO THE LETTER OF HIS FIVE POINTS, IT MADE SENSE PSYCHOLOGICALLY FOR THE BRITISH TO ADOPT THE AFRICAN ONE-TIER FRAMEOWRK WITH THE ADDITIOON OF A BRITISH PRESENCE AND A VOTE BLOCKING MECHANISM, SINCE THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE ACTUAL BALANCE OF POWER. IT IS NOT THAT THE AFRICANS CAN BE EASILY DECEIVED BY APPEARANCES, BUT AS HARD NEGOTIATORS THEY WERE SIMPLY NOT PREPARED TO YIELD ON THE COUNCIL OF STATE BUT WERE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE ON OTHER MATTERS. THERE WAS NOTHING INHERENTLY WRONG WITH THE BRITISH APPROACH, PROVIDED THEY COULD BUILD IN SUFFICIENT SAFEGUARDS TO MEET SMITH'S SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS. WHAT THEY TRIED TO DO, HOWEVER, WAS TO MEET WHAT THEY CONCEIVED TO BE AS GENERAL WHITE CONCERNS RATHER THAN THE MORE SPECIFIC CONCERNS THAT SMITH AND HIS RHODESIAN FRONT MIGHT HOLD. HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE THERE MAY BE BETWEEN THESE CONCERNS IS UNCERTAIN BUT IT COULD BE VERY GREAT INDEED

IF SMITH IS DETERMINED TO KEEP SOME HOLD ON POWER AT ALL COSTS. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY WHAT MOST AFRICANS FEAR AND MAY WELL BE THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM: THE AFRICANS WANT TO ASSURE THEMSELVES OF IRREVERSIBILITY BUT FEAR THAT SMITH WANTS REVERSIBILITY, I.E. ARRANGEMENTS THAT WILL ASSURE HIM THAT THE PROCESS CAN BE HALTED OR REVERSED.

5. FOREGOING IS RELEVANT TO QUESTION OF WHERE PROCESS CAN BE TAKEN FROM HERE. IF SMITH INDEED WANTS REVERSIBILITY THEN IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TO REACH AGREEMENT AT THIS TIME. IF HIS CONCERNS ARE MORE LEGITIMATE IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO COME UP WITH MODIFICATIONS OF THE BRITISH PLAN TO MAKE IT MORE ACCEPTABLE TO SMITH WITHOUT LOSING THE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT OF THE AFRICANS, ALTHOUGH SMITH'S REFUSAL TO CONSIDER THE UK PLAN EVEN AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSIONS MAKES THIS APPEAR PROBLEMATIC. A RETURN TO THE IDEAS OF ANNEX C MIGHT BE THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE BUT SEEMS HARDLY PRACTICABLE GIVEN THE AFRICANS' PREVIOUS REJECTION OF ANY KIND OF UPPER TIER
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 JOHANN 00151 261412Z

AND THEIR EXPOSURE TO THE MORE ACCEPTABLE (TO THEM) APPROACH OF THE UK PLAN.

6. ONE DISCONCERTING NOTE IS UNCONFIRMED NEWS FROM LONDON (ACCORDING TO MANSFIELD) THAT CROSLAND HAS PLACED THE BRITISH PAPER "IN THE LIBRARY" OF PARLIAMENT, THUS MAKING IT PUBLIC. THIS WILL MAKE IT FAR MORE DIFFICULT TO GET THE AFRICANS TO ACCEPT CHANGES IN SMITH'S FAVOR AS THEY WOULD BE SEEN BY THEIR FOLLOWERES TO BE MAKNG CONCESSIONS TO SMITH.

7. SINCE WRITING THE ABOVE I HAVE RECEIVED BRIEFING FROM MANSFIELD ON ANALYSIS RICHARD IS SUBMITTING TO LONDON WHICH I WILL REPORT WITH FURTHER THOUGHTS IN SEPTTEL.
JOHNSON

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